responsibility for the future of their country and the West African subregion as a whole.

Given the situation, the Security Council must reaffirm the international community's commitment to accompanying the Ivorian parties on their march towards peace. The new momentum injected into the peace process by the Pretoria Agreement must be fully supported by responsible work on the part of the Security Council in establishing provisions allowing effective action on behalf of the Ivorian parties in the context of the peace process in their country.

The United Nations must therefore contribute, to the extent possible and in an appropriate manner, as called for in the Pretoria Agreement, to training officers of a national police force for the Forces nouvelles, and supporting the organization of elections and the disarmament and dismantling of militias, not to mention the other functions recently entrusted to the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), in conjunction with the Licorne forces, including monitoring the arms embargo and supervising the national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme.

From our perspective, the United Nations commitment will be an important part of building the confidence of the parties in the electoral process once they have resolved the difficult constitutional issue of article 35 of the Constitution. It will therefore be necessary for us to revisit UNOCI's mandate and consider the matter of strengthening its staff with adequate resources and means to undertake the specific and increased number of tasks which they have been instructed to perform.

In analysing the factors that distinguish the Pretoria Agreement from the other agreements reached earlier by the Ivorian parties, we find the close follow-up provided by the Special Representative and the mediator to have been critical. It would be useful for them to maintain their presence in helping the parties to manage the details of implementing the Agreement until the effective holding of scheduled elections in October 2005. In that regard, the arbitration to be undertaken in the preparatory process is extremely sensitive and it is therefore essential to help the Ivorians to rebuild the trust that has been lost between them. Generally speaking, it is extremely important that the necessary international follow-up measures on the Pretoria Agreement be speedily applied so that the parties can make judicious use of the brief time remaining to prepare properly for the elections, allowing them to be held on schedule in October 2005.

In conclusion, we reiterate our firm support for the African Union mediator. We welcome his committed efforts to achieve a peaceful resolution of the Ivorian crisis. We can say that the resolution of that crisis is within reach. The mediator deserves credit, and so do the Ivorian parties, who in signing the Pretoria Agreement demonstrated that they have faith in the future of their country.

Mr. Baali (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): First, I would like to bid welcome to Mr. Aziz Pahad and to thank him for his important briefing on the Pretoria Agreement and on the efforts of the South African mediation team to implement it.

I wish also to very warmly commend the Government of South Africa and President Mbeki for their extraordinary contribution to peace in Côte d'Ivoire. We also appreciate the efforts of the Ivorian political actors, who have demonstrated responsibility, and who have taken this final opportunity to conclude a political compromise, which will pave the way to a peaceful end to the crisis. This is not the time or the place to analyse the Pretoria Agreement and its relevance, particularly the arrangements intended to lift the burdens which have weighed on the process and which held it in perpetual jeopardy.

We consider that the Pretoria Agreement opens up reasonably promising prospects for a reactivation of the peace process in Côte d'Ivoire. Every effort must therefore be made to bring it to prompt fruition. All the actors responsible for its implementation must play their appropriate roles. It is clear that the Ivorian parties bear the major responsibility for the implementation of the Agreement, but the role of the international community, especially the United Nations, is just as important. One of the formidable challenges involved in supporting the implementation of the Agreement is that of maintaining confidence in the process by ensuring that each party shoulders its share of the responsibility in good faith and in a timely manner.

The armed forces of the two camps, as they have done in the past, have shown the way by scrupulously following the disarmament timetables. It is important for political leaders to fulfil their obligations. Indeed, success in carrying out this key element of the

settlement of the crisis depends on action with respect to the other provisions of the Agreement. Of course, there is the question of article 35 of the Constitution which we hope will be resolved tomorrow, as well as the issue of legislative harmonization so that October's elections will be held in proper conditions. It is encouraging to note in this regard that, in their aspirations to peace, Ivorians of all convictions have lent their support to the Pretoria Agreement. Ivorian political leaders, including President Laurent Gbagbo and the leaders of other institutions of the Republic, will be able to meet the legitimate expectations of the people for peace, security and development.

For its part, the international community cannot allow this historic opportunity to help Ivorians find peace and security slip away. More than ever before, it must be prepared to support the mediation in those areas where it has agreed to play a role in monitoring the implementation of the Agreement. In particular, it is important for the international community to clearly express its willingness to support the mediation in its role of arbiter, and to firmly support any decision it needs to take along those lines. The path of the implementation of the Agreement will be arduous and strewn with obstacles. Obstacles will arise, and they will be easier to overcome if the parties realize that the mediation is supported and trusted by the international community.

It is clear also that, in addition to political support, financial and technical assistance will be critical to bring the process to a successful conclusion. The programme of disarmament and the social reintegration of demobilized elements and members of dismantled militias, as well as the restructuring of the armed forces, will require considerable expertise and resources. The idea of temporary recruitment of 600 members of the Forces nouvelles, who, together with the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), would be responsible for security in the northern part of the country, seems to be relevant in three areas: this group would participate in the process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR); it would strengthen the confidence of the Forces nouvelles in the process; and it would fill a security vacuum in that part of the country during the transition period. Implementing that plan will also require resources. The question of financing is especially urgent because international financial institutions have suspended their cooperation with the country. We therefore need to find a rapid solution to this problem.

Support for the electoral process is another element that merits the attention of the international community, especially since the United Nations will be playing a greater role in it. Every effort must be made to ensure that the elections take place on the scheduled date and in the best possible conditions.

To sum up, the prospects opened by the Pretoria Agreement and the priorities it sets mean that the international community will very probably have to modify its operation on the ground, including through the draft resolution that the Security Council is preparing to discuss in the next few days. Algeria is prepared to make an active and constructive contribution, as we are convinced that every effort should be made to help this country succeed in its peace initiative.

Mr. Kitaoka (Japan): As reflected in the Pretoria Agreement, the African Union and its mediator for Côte d'Ivoire, President Mbeki, have been playing increasingly important roles, which makes close coordination between the Security Council and the African Union more important than ever. My delegation, Mr. President, therefore greatly appreciates your initiative to convene today's meeting in such a timely manner. I also wish to express our appreciation to Mr. Aziz Pahad, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of South Africa, and to Ambassador Simeon Adekanye of Nigeria for their detailed and informative briefings. I would like to make three points.

First, Japan welcomes the Pretoria Agreement as a demonstration of the renewed commitment of all Ivorian parties to the peace process. We commend President Mbeki and the African Union for their tenacious efforts to promote the Agreement, providing a great example of an African problem being resolved by Africans. We are also encouraged by the first steps already taken by the Ivorian parties to implement the Agreement, such as the meeting held on 14 April by the National Armed Forces of Côte d'Ivoire (FANCI) and the Armed Forces of Forces Nouvelles (FAFN) on the implementation of the national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) plan. It should be stressed nevertheless that it is critical to ensure full and prompt implementation of all commitments made in this and previous agreements. All the Ivorian parties should faithfully respect the provisions of these

agreements, including the decision by President Mbeki with regard to eligibility for the presidency. Japan is ready to consider further assistance for both DDR and the elections, depending upon developments in the situation in Côte d'Ivoire.

Secondly, as to the question of sanctions measures, it is not an appropriate time to immediately apply targeted sanctions against individuals, since the Ivorian parties have just shown their readiness, through the Pretoria Agreement, to revitalize the peace process. It should, however, be underscored that no further delay can be permitted in the preparations for the elections scheduled for October. All Ivorian parties must recognize that any delay in implementing the commitments made in the Agreement will render them immediately subject to sanctions measures.

Thirdly, concerning the role of the United Nations in the peace process, it is significant that the Ivorian parties have invited the United Nations to participate in organizing the elections. We look forward to receiving the views and recommendations of the Secretary-General in this regard, specifically with respect to how the United Nations and its mission on the ground can play an effective role in ensuring transparent, free and fair elections within the limited resources available.

At the same time, my Government is fully aware of the continued precariousness and, at times, volatility of the security situation in the country. As a result of our own careful assessment, based on the reports of our embassy in Abidjan and on information gathered through the mission that we sent to the country, are more than ever convinced that serious deliberations with regard to a certain level of reinforcement of the peacekeeping operation are needed. The Government of Japan is now ready to consider such reinforcement, although we think that, if the situation were not so precarious, better use could have been made of the $30 million in funds for the additional reinforcement — 20 per cent of which will be borne by Japan — for the reconstruction and development of the country.

We sincerely hope that the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire will be brought to an end by the successful holding of transparent, free and fair presidential elections and through the faithful implementation of the Pretoria Agreement and all previous agreements. We have no doubt that such a process will strengthen the democratic foundations of the country and help it to regain its place as an economic driving force for the entire western African subregion.

Mr. Dumitru (Romania) (*spoke in French*): Since the most recent public meeting of the Council on Côte d'Ivoire less than a month ago (see S/PV.5152), there has been significant progress in the situation in the country. We welcome this opportunity to meet again today to take note of those achievements.

In that context, we extend a warm welcome to Mr. Aziz Pahad, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of South Africa. We thank him for his briefing on the successful mediation of President Mbeki on behalf of the African Union. We would also like to thank the Permanent Representative of Nigeria for the message that he delivered on behalf of President Obasanjo.

The Pretoria Agreement has charted a course towards the restoration of peace in Côte d'Ivoire. After many months of political deadlock, there is now a glimmer of hope in that regard. We take this opportunity to pay tribute, with admiration and gratitude, to the outstanding efforts and perseverance of President Mbeki and his team in working to extricate Côte d'Ivoire from a calamitous situation that threatened to continue indefinitely.

The future priorities in Côte d'Ivoire are clear: the immediate launch of the disarmament process, including the disarmament of the militias, and its successful completion, and proper preparations for the elections in October. Given the new political dynamic since the Pretoria Agreement, all outstanding problems should be resolved in a speedy and responsible manner, including those related to the dispute with regard to amending article 35 of the Constitution.

Much ground has been covered between the signing of the Linas-Marcoussis and the Pretoria Agreements. We welcome the fact that the Pretoria Agreement constitutes a needed supplement to the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement. But it is clear that, after two years of repeated failure by the parties to fulfil their commitments, the gulf of mistrust between the parties cannot be bridged all at once. The reconciliation process will be difficult and protracted. The propaganda of hatred must be silenced and a new climate of tolerance built up gradually, so as to facilitate the reunification of the country.

The international community must remain vigilant so as to ensure that the military option is wholly renounced. Compliance with the arms embargo will continue to be strictly monitored by the Security Council. In that regard, we welcome the recent establishment of a group of experts, pursuant to resolution 1584 (2005).

The most recent developments in Côte d'Ivoire will have a direct and immediate effect on the situation of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI). Given the election timetable and the forthcoming launch of the disarmament process, the responsibilities of the mission will increase. We therefore agree with those who believe that the mission's resources need to be increased and its mandate revised. In this regard, we look forward to relevant proposals from the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. Romania is ready to take a constructive part in future negotiations on that subject.

The holding of free, open and transparent elections in Côte d'Ivoire is an essential precondition for the country's return to normality. This is a particularly difficult task given the requirements of the electoral timetable. Any approach must also take into account the risks of outbreaks of violence and social unrest associated with elections that have a significant political impact. We have already seen this in the subregion. Thus, proper preparations for the elections is crucial. International assistance is also vital, and in this context we support an increased role for the United Nations in this area. Cooperation among the African Union, UNOCI and the Security Council continues to be of particular importance.

In conclusion, a great deal is at stake for Côte d'Ivoire and for the region as a whole. Support has been offered by the international community and by the region. We hope that the Ivorian actors will continue to demonstrate a sense of responsibility by taking advantage of that support, for the benefit of the country.

Mr. Mayoral (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like first of all to thank Mr. Aziz Pahad, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of South Africa, for his briefing on the Agreement reached in Pretoria on 6 April among the parties to the conflict in Côte d'Ivoire.

We are gratified by the results of the mediation carried out by President Mbeki of South Africa on behalf of the African Union. In that regard, we believe that the Pretoria Agreement demonstrates the usefulness of cooperation among the Security Council, the African Union and subregional organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States in addressing collective security problems and developing effective peacekeeping and peacebuilding strategies.

We would also like to thank the representative of Nigeria for the message that he conveyed to us on behalf of the African Union.

The Pretoria Agreement not only declares a cessation of hostilities and an end to war, but also commits the parties to begin the process of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of militias, to amend article 35 of the Constitution concerning conditions for eligibility for the presidency, to guarantee the security of Forces nouvelles members of the Transitional Government and to carry out the reforms necessary for the holding of the elections scheduled for October 2005.

We believe that, once all of that has been accomplished, the spiral of escalating violence that we have recently witnessed will come to an end. In the Pretoria Agreement, the parties reaffirmed their commitment to comply with all relevant United Nations resolutions, the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement and the Accra II and Accra III Agreements; that gives us hope that on this occasion the parties will have the genuine resolve to fulfil their commitments.

Thus, we believe that it is more urgent than ever to provide all possible incentives for the parties to fulfil their commitments under the Pretoria Agreement. In that context, we believe that implementation of the provisions of resolution 1572 (2004) continues to be a relevant tool to that end. We also believe that, as the representative of South Africa noted, the mandate of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire should be modified so that the mission can monitor the elections and support the disarmament of the militias. We urge donor countries to make funds available in the near future to secure the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process.

We face a critical juncture for the future of Côte d'Ivoire and the entire region: the successful mediation of President Mbeki has created the necessary momentum for optimism about the peace process in Côte d'Ivoire. In that context, Argentina once again

welcomes the worthy efforts of the African Union to relaunch that process.

Finally, we believe that the citizens of Côte d'Ivoire must now act responsibly to achieve peace and carry out the process that will return them to the path of development.

Mr. Tarisse da Fontoura (Brazil): I welcome Deputy Foreign Minister Pahad and thank him and Ambassador Adekanye of Nigeria for their updates on the mediation process for Côte d'Ivoire. Less than 30 days after his first meeting with the Council, Mr. Pahad today reported on the positive developments that have taken place since then. My delegation praises the South African mediation, especially President Mbeki, for the results achieved so far. Together with the Ivorian parties, President Mbeki skilfully put together the Pretoria Agreement, which paved the way for the most recent determination with regard to the issue of eligibility.

Brazil commends the African Union for its increased leadership throughout the continent and for the strong support it provides for resolving conflicts by peaceful means. In so doing, the new organization consolidates its legitimate role in the promotion of peace and stability in Africa. Frequent and close dialogue between the Security Council and the African Union is proving to be extremely useful.

Let me turn now to developments in Côte d'Ivoire. The news is encouraging, and we reaffirm our hope that the political preconditions have been created for the holding of elections next October and for the return of peace, stability and normalcy in a reunified country. The Ivorian parties have to act expeditiously to enforce the decision allowing the participation of all candidates. We welcome the fact that the principle of the inclusion of all parties in the national reconciliation process is being observed, wisely adapted to be consistent with the text of the Constitution. These are essential landmarks for reconciliation and legitimacy in the years to come.

We are also very pleased with developments on the ground. We welcome the reconvening of cabinet meetings with the participation of ministers from the Forces nouvelles. At this stage, the full engagement of all political forces in the Government and in the Administration is a prerequisite for the delivery of services sorely needed by the population.

On the military front, we welcome the beginning of the withdrawal of heavy weapons from the front line as an important step. We strongly encourage the National Armed Forces of Côte d'Ivoire (FANCI) and the Forces nouvelles to make all possible efforts to comply with the calendar for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process agreed in Bouaké.

Finally, my delegation would like to reaffirm its belief that the Ivorian people and political parties are on the right path towards peace and sustainable development. The Council should continue to support their efforts and provide all suitable assistance that they may require to that end.

My delegation is ready to engage in negotiations on the approval of a new mandate for the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire.

Mr. Konuzin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are pleased to welcome the presence in the Chamber of the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of South Africa, Mr. Aziz Pahad. We thank him for his thorough briefing on developments in the peace process in Côte d'Ivoire and on the mediation efforts made by the President of South Africa, Mr. Thabo Mbeki. We also thank the representative of Nigeria for his valuable statement on behalf of the African Union.

The Russian delegation welcomes the outcome of the Pretoria meeting of the Ivorian parties and the steps that they have taken to break the impasse and advance the peace process through the practical implementation of the agreements reached in the capital of South Africa. We hope that the parties will comply unconditionally with their obligations by implementing the key provisions of the Agreement.

The major objectives now are to implement the National Assembly amendment to article 35 of the Constitution, which sets out the requirements for presidential candidates, and to launch the disarmament process. Resolving those issues will create the conditions necessary for implementing measures to overcome the de facto split in the country and will help in the organization of the presidential elections planned for October. Everything possible must be done to hold the elections on time since their postponement, especially an indefinite postponement, would threaten very serious negative consequences.

We deeply appreciate the work of President Mbeki in the Côte d'Ivoire mediation mission established under the auspices of the African Union. To a large extent, it was his personal effort that led to the positive outcome of the Pretoria meeting of all Ivorian parties.

Significant assistance to the Ivorian settlement process will be provided by the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire and the French forces supporting it. The mediation efforts of the Economic Community of West African States also play an important role in the peace process. Nevertheless, as important as external assistance to the Ivorian settlement process is, the greatest responsibility for seeking and implementing difficult decisions for a settlement of the crisis lies with the Ivorians themselves. We call on the parties to the conflict to maintain the positive momentum of the Pretoria talks until the end of the process and to demonstrate the political will fully to comply with their commitments in the peace process.

With respect to the Security Council, the Russian delegation is prepared to consider further tasks for the United Nations, including the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, to support the settlement process.

Ms. Løj (Denmark): I should like to join others in welcoming back to the Council the representative of the Government of South Africa, Deputy Foreign Minister Pahad, and to express my gratitude for the encouraging and forward-looking briefing that we have been given today. Likewise, let me express our appreciation for the statement made by the representative of Nigeria.

It is clear that for the children, women and men of Côte d'Ivoire, bright white smoke was ascending from Pretoria on 6 April. There, under the effective mediation of South African President Thabo Mbeki, all the Ivorian parties apparently mobilized the much-needed political will and courage to give peace a chance in Côte d'Ivoire. We sincerely hope that this commitment by the parties will be sustained, and Denmark fully supports the Pretoria Agreement as a means to that end. We welcome the steps already taken by the Ivorian parties, including the revival of the Government of National Reconciliation, the pullback of weapons from the zone of confidence and the agreed time frame for disarmament.

Still, real and substantive challenges remain ahead. The details of the disarmament process have yet to be hammered out, and the legal foundation for the holding of free and fair elections has not yet been fully established. We urge the Ivorian parties to implement the peace agreements without delay, including the decision taken by the mediator on the issue of eligibility to run for the presidency. The schedule is compressed. No more time can be wasted before the election.

For the international community, there is now a peace to keep. The Pretoria Agreement calls for greater involvement by the United Nations in various aspects of the peace process. Denmark fully supports such increased involvement and will work to ensure the necessary resources to that end, in the belief that our nascent optimism about the peace process will be sustained. We support an appropriate strengthening of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) and an extension of its presence. At the same time, it is imperative that the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States — as well as other key regional and national actors — continue to stay involved and that they, together with the United Nations, develop a sound division of labour.

We should not forget, however, that there are still some developments that give rise to concern. I am thinking in particular about the situation in the western part of Côte d'Ivoire, where ethnically motivated violence seems to be continuing unabated. The transfer of weapons and of nomadic mercenaries, including children, appears to be continuing on the borders with neighbouring countries, especially Liberia. Those developments demand immediate attention by the Government of National Reconciliation and by international actors. We urge UNOCI to continue to cooperate with the United Nations Mission in Liberia on those matters and would also welcome a thorough assessment of the situation.

Finally, I should also like to underline that what my delegation has stated in earlier meetings remains valid. The measures provided for in the Council's relevant resolutions continue to apply. The arms embargo must be effectively implemented. We also persist in our belief that any failure to implement the provisions of the peace agreements should be met immediately with determined measures and that impunity must be ended.

Mr. Vassilakis (Greece): Greece welcomes the signing on 6 April of the Pretoria Agreement on the Peace Process in Côte d'Ivoire, the full implementation of which carries the prospect of a sustainable peace. It complements the Linas-Marcoussis and Accra III Agreements.

We express our deep appreciation to South African President Thabo Mbeki for his intense mediation efforts, which led to the rapprochement of the Ivorian political leaders and to the conclusion of this important peace Agreement. Many thanks go also to Mr. Pahad for returning to New York a second time and presenting an informative briefing on the outcome of the Pretoria negotiations. It is now up to the signatory parties to show the necessary political will to implement their commitments under the Agreement. That is the only way to end suffering, to restore peace, stability, democracy and national unity in all parts of the country and to contribute to real national reconciliation.

In Pretoria, the political leaders agreed to refrain from all military actions and to engage in a political dialogue that could produce tangible results and put an end to the long-standing conflict. They also agreed on very important issues: ensuring the implementation of the national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) plan and proceeding immediately with the disarmament and dismantling of the militia throughout the territory. The meeting between the military commanders of both sides and the agreement reached at Bouaké on a provisional timetable for disarmament are first steps in that direction. We are looking forward to seeing the outcome of the upcoming May conference, scheduled to work out the details for implementing the disarmament agreements. In addition, the parties agreed to take measures aimed at holding free, fair and transparent presidential elections in October 2005. We welcome the provision relating to the presence of the United Nations in the organization of those elections.

As for article 35 of the Constitution of Côte d'Ivoire, we share the concerns of President Mbeki. We fully support the determination made by the mediator concerning that article as well as his request that President Gbagbo exercise his powers under article 48 in order to give legal force to that determination.

In the Agreement, the Ivorian political leaders reaffirmed, inter alia, their commitment to all United Nations resolutions on Côte d'Ivoire. We welcome that commitment. We expect that, this time, the political leaders will fully implement their obligations under resolutions 1572 (2004) and 1584 (2005). At the same time, it is important to remind all States concerned — particularly those of the region — of their obligation to report to the Committee established under paragraph 14 of resolution 1572 (2004) concerning the implementation of the arms embargo imposed by those resolutions.

In my capacity as Chairman of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1572 (2004), I would like to inform the members of the Council that the group of experts provided for in paragraph 7 of resolution 1584 (2005) has already been appointed, as of 18 April. Its members are ready to leave for the area in order to monitor the implementation of the arms embargo. It is important that the parties in Côte d'Ivoire and the other countries of the region cooperate with the experts so as to enable them to carry out their mandate.

I would like to emphasize the important role that the African Union is playing in trying to consolidate peace and stability not only in Côte d'Ivoire but also in the whole area of West Africa and in Africa in general. In that respect, we thank President Obasanjo of Nigeria for his efforts. We would also like once again to express our support for the ongoing efforts of Mr. Mbeki and for his leading role in finding a sustainable solution to the political crisis in Côte d'Ivoire on the basis of democratic governance, respect for human rights and commitment to the economic and social development of the country. We hope that the Agreement reached in Pretoria signifies the beginning of a new era for Côte d'Ivoire. I am sure that the Security Council will provide all the assistance necessary to guarantee a success story.

Finally, we congratulate the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Pierre Schori, and we trust that he will carry out his mandate in an excellent manner.

Mr. Mahiga (United Republic of Tanzania): It is less than a month since we last had a briefing from Mr. Aziz Pahad, South African Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and representative of the mediator of the African Union peace initiative in Côte d'Ivoire. My delegation welcomes Mr. Pahad to the Security Council once again and wishes to thank him for his second

briefing. We also welcome and endorse the statement made by the Ambassador of Nigeria on behalf of the Chairman of the African Union (AU), President Obasanjo.

During his first briefing to the Council, Mr. Pahad informed us, among other things, about the Pretoria meeting, which took place on 3 April 2005. The meeting produced the Pretoria Agreement, which was signed by all the parties on 6 April. President Mbeki has subsequently made a determination on article 35, a ruling that the Council should support. The Pretoria Agreement complements and has given a new lease on life to the Linas-Marcoussis and Accra Agreements and is paving the way forward in the peace process. The issue of article 35 is central to the conflict and critical to its political solution. It is our earnest hope that all the parties will be committed to the Pretoria Agreement and accept the ruling made by the mediator on the issue of article 35.

Getting an agreement from the conflicting parties is a positive development. But getting their firm commitment to live up to what they have agreed to is the real test and the best chance of ending the conflict peacefully. We pay special tribute to President Mbeki for his personal efforts, which contributed to the success of the Pretoria Agreement. In the same vein, we congratulate the Ivorian parties for their patriotism and for their commitment to the peace process in their country.

The positive developments that have taken place in Côte d'Ivoire within the last week are encouraging. The first is the assumption by Ambassador Shori, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, of his functions in Abidjan. The second is the opposition's joining the Government of National Reconciliation after a five-month boycott. The third is the positive outcome of the Bouake meeting between the Government and the Force nouvelles leaders, who agreed on a timetable for the implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programme. Equally significant is the withdrawal of heavy weapons from the zone of confidence as the initial stage of implementing the DDR programme. These developments are a clear demonstration of the commitment of the parties to the Pretoria Agreement and to a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

It is our sincere hope that the DDR process will begin in earnest on 14 May 2005, as scheduled. It is of vital importance that the signatories to the Pretoria Agreement commit to the timetable of the DDR process. It is only through the successful implementation of the DDR programme and the restructuring of the army that the country can once again be reunified and the holding of the October election made possible. To give peace a chance, it is important that all the parties make their positions known on President Mbeki's ruling on article 35. The Security Council should give strong support to that ruling and underline the importance of elections within the agreed time frame.

The biggest challenge facing the international community in general and the Security Council in particular is to encourage the parties to move forward in the implementation of the Pretoria Agreement. The leaders of all the parties to the conflict must be encouraged to instil a sense of confidence among their followers in order to create a conducive environment for elections — the basis for a lasting peace in the country. We particularly urge the media in Côte d'Ivoire to support the recent peace accomplishments and to sustain their current positive tone, in a spirit of national reconciliation.

Now that the Pretoria meeting has succeeded in putting the peace process back on track, we need to revisit and consider favourably the Secretary-General's earlier recommendations that the Council approve the additional military, civilian police and civilian resources proposed in his third report on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire. The Council should also consider favourably the additional security requirements recommended by the Pretoria Agreement. Adequate security between now and the scheduled elections in October is critical, both for the DDR process and for enhancing public security.

We also support the recommendation that the mandate of UNOCI be extended for a period of 12 months following the current technical rollover. The extension of UNOCI's mandate will obviously help to guarantee a smooth implementation of the transition. It will also be necessary for stabilizing the country in the immediate post-election period and for laying the foundation for post-conflict peacebuilding and the reconstruction of Côte d'Ivoire.

Mr. Fendrick: We wish to thank first of all Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs Aziz Pahad for his briefing. We commend the superb mediation that

President Mbeki has done on behalf of the African Union, and we also wish to thank the Permanent Representative of Nigeria for his briefing on behalf of President Obasanjo. We wish to pay tribute to all those who have supported these efforts, which have begun to bear some fruit.

My Government welcomes the Pretoria Agreement. We are encouraged by the constructive engagement that took place to build on prior promises to overcome disagreements. The Pretoria Agreement provides an opportunity to move events forward on the ground in Côte d'Ivoire.

It is too early, of course, to say that all is well. The parties have made important and serious commitments which must now be fulfilled. We call on the parties to abide by the letter and the spirit of the Pretoria Agreement in order to move the process begun by the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement to a peaceful and successful conclusion. A real cessation of violence is vital for this Agreement to succeed. It is for that reason that we are in agreement with President Mbeki's condemnation of ceasefire violations in November 2004 and February 2005. These are reminders of types of events which must not recur.

In that regard, we also commend the parties for their formal declaration of an end to hostilities. That is an important political statement, but it is action on the ground that matters most. We look forward to seeing that commitment to peace backed up by concrete action, in strict accordance with the Agreement.

Disarmament is certainly critical. We are pleased that the armed forces of both sides have resumed their discussions on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR), as promised in the Agreement. We commend the withdrawal of heavy weapons from forward positions by the National Armed Forces of Côte d'Ivoire (FANCI) and the Forces nouvelles. This is a good step in the right direction. We now urge the Government of Côte d'Ivoire and the Force nouvelles to honour their agreement to finalize their DDR plans. We are pleased that two ministers from Forces nouvelles have rejoined the Government, and we call for the full return of the Forces nouvelles to the Government.

We call on the National Assembly of Côte d'Ivoire to implement the required amendments to the Independent Electoral Commission and to adopt all other legislation necessary to conform to agreements that have been reached by the two sides.

We call on President Gbagbo to respect, implement and publicly support President Mbeki's determination on presidential eligibility. We look forward to the draft decree on the appointment of members of the Radio Télévision Ivoirienne board. We note that the Security Council continues to monitor the situation, including the arms embargo and the existing sanctions regime.

Mr. Mercado (Philippines): My delegation thanks the Chinese presidency for having convened this important public meeting. We welcome back to the Council Deputy Foreign Minister Pahad and thank him for his briefing.

We take this opportunity to acknowledge the unstinting efforts of President Mbeki in trying to find a way to move the Ivorian peace process forward. We also thank Ambassador Adekanye for his views and recommendations on behalf of the African Union (AU) as to how the Council could support the Pretoria Agreement.

The situation in Côte d'Ivoire has been and continues to be challenging. The mediation process has experienced its fair share of stumbling-blocks and failures. But, through the perseverance of President Mbeki, a breakthrough was achieved in Pretoria on 6 April last. My delegation welcomes this development and fully supports this peace accord. We hope that the parties will consider the Pretoria accords as the final guiding Agreement and unconditionally implement their commitments.

Allow me to share my delegation's views following the signing of the Pretoria Agreement. First, my delegation is of the view that there can be no military solution to the conflict in Côte d'Ivoire. We are therefore particularly encouraged by the commencement of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of the National Armed Forces and the Forces nouvelles, starting with the four-day withdrawal of heavy weaponry from the front line on 21 April 2005.

Secondly, as all parties to the conflict have agreed to cease all hostilities, there should no longer be any recruitment of troops by any of the parties, including from neighbouring States.

Thirdly, the momentum gained from the signing of the Pretoria Agreement must be maintained. The major actors must realize the stakes involved and rise to the occasion. Trust must be established among the Ivorian parties. As Ambassador Adekanye of Nigeria said, sacrifices have to be made.

We hope that the major decisions on an important political issue in Côte d'Ivoire, namely, the amendment of article 35 of the Constitution, will be made in a statesman-like manner, taking into account the lessons of history.

Lastly, with less than six months left before the elections planned for October, my delegation agrees that the Council should urgently consider the mediation's request for assistance relating to security and the elections, in order that free, fair and peaceful elections can take place as scheduled.

We support the need to revisit the mandate of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, and look forward to the report of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations on how the request for assistance by the mediation can be translated into concrete action.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I should now like to make a statement in my capacity as the representative of China.

The Chinese delegation welcomes the presence of Mr. Aziz Pahad, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of South Africa, as well as his briefing to the Council regarding the latest developments on the situation in Côte d'Ivoire.

The meeting held in Pretoria in early April made good progress. The Ivorian parties signed a peace agreement and declared an immediate cessation of all hostilities and the end of war throughout the national territory. China is very pleased at that development, and hopes that the Agreement will produce new opportunities to revitalize the Ivorian peace process. We very much appreciate President Mbeki's important role in that regard.

China has closely followed the developments in the Ivorian situation and sincerely hopes for the early restoration of peace and stability in Côte d'Ivoire. We are pleased to note that, subsequent to the signing of the Pretoria Agreement, Ivorian Government forces and the Forces nouvelles reached agreement on the withdrawal of heavy weapons, and that some ministers from opposition parties have returned to Cabinet meetings.

As the mediator in the Ivorian crisis, President Mbeki has taken important determinations regarding the eligibility of presidential candidates. The first priority is to expeditiously implement disarmament programmes in order that opposition parties may return to the Government of National Reconciliation, to secure appropriate settlements of political differences in accordance with the Agreement and to ensure that the October elections proceed smoothly. We believe that, so long as Ivorian parties act in good faith and effectively honour their pledges, the prospects for the Ivorian peace process will be bright.

Progress in the Ivorian peace process will require not just joint efforts from all Ivorian parties, but also continued assistance from the international community. The United Nations should continue to strengthen its coordination and cooperation with the African Union (AU) and other regional and subregional organizations, support and work with President Mbeki in his mediation efforts and back the AU's continued leading role. China stands ready to work with other members to continue to study the specific issue of the extension and reinforcement of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, as well as to promote the Security Council's continued role in the resolution of the Ivorian issue.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I now give the floor to the representative of Côte d'Ivoire.

Mr. Djangoné-Bi (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): As this is the first time I am taking the floor in the Council since your assumption of the presidency, allow me, Sir, to congratulate you on the well-deserved trust vested in you by your peers. I thank you too for allowing my delegation to participate in this meeting of the Security Council.

I wish also to thank Mr. Aziz Pahad, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of South Africa, who has briefed the Council on behalf of the African Union on the mediation so admirably and effectively carried out in Côte d'Ivoire by Mr. Thabo Mbeki, President of South Africa. Further, I wish to welcome Mr. Pierre Schori to New York and to express to him our appreciation for the heart and soul with

which he has embarked upon his mission in Côte d'Ivoire. We commend his impartiality and wish him every success in Côte d'Ivoire. I also thank Ambassador Simeon Adekanye, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, whose President, Mr. Olusegun Obasanjo, is the current Chairman of the African Union. For my delegation, his presence is one of the comforting signs of the significant role being played by the African Union in the restoration of peace and stability to Côte d'Ivoire.

An objective comparative analysis of the various settlement agreements concerning the Ivorian crisis signed by those referred to as the Ivorian parties to the conflict should convince the entire international community that President Thabo Mbeki has been able to achieve a result to benefit international peace and security that would have been unheard of not too long ago. Strengthened by the signatories' unconditional trust in a mediator sensitive to the cultural and sociological realities in Côte d'Ivoire, the Pretoria Agreement does not lend itself to any partisan interpretation. It therefore provides no pretext for either inaction or the placement of obstacles on the path towards national peace and reconciliation. Recent developments on the ground lead us to believe that the Pretoria Agreement is being implemented by all its signatories. Peace and reconciliation will therefore be achieved in Côte d'Ivoire through the unanimous resolve of Ivorians and the renewed support of the African Union and the international community, and in particular that of the countries of the subregion.

As Mr. Aziz Pahad has just noted before the members of the Council while speaking on behalf of the African Union — whose Peace and Security Council is honoured to be in partnership with the Security Council — Côte d'Ivoire's defence and security forces and the armed component of the Forces nouvelles have resumed contacts and relaunched the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) process from the point at which it was suspended several months ago. In accordance with the commitments undertaken at Pretoria and the DDR timetable jointly agreed at Bouaké on 14 April 2005, heavy weapons were withdrawn from the front line between 21 and 24 April and cantonment centres were identified. Moreover, and also in keeping with the Pretoria Agreement, the return to the Government of Forces nouvelles ministers, however modest at present, is today a reality, as evidenced by the last two meetings of the Council of Ministers.

Other developments contributing to the progressive and decisive completion of the DDR process in Côte d'Ivoire will follow, resulting in the reform of the security sector. In that regard, and just as in the case of the DDR exercise, the experience of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), the International Peace Academy and other international observers on the international stage attests to the fact that that reform, along with the DDR that precedes it, is the longest, most multidimensional and sensitive process in the protracted period of post-conflict peacebuilding and national reconstruction. For these processes to be successful, there will have to be close cooperation between the national community involved —Côte d'Ivoire in this instance — and the international community. Both of those protagonists will also have to demonstrate the same concerted action evoked by the Secretary-General in his new concept of collective and comprehensive security. The relationship between Côte d'Ivoire and international financial institutions will also have to be of the nature described by speakers who took the floor before me.

As regards the very sensitive point of article 35 on the conditions of eligibility to the presidency of the Republic, President Mbeki, the African Union mediator, made a decision pursuant to article 14 of the Pretoria Agreement and in consultation with the Chairman of the African Union and the Secretary-General of the United Nations. He informed President Gbagbo of that decision in a letter dated 11 April 2005. President Gbagbo is preparing to make a statement to the nation in support of peace, to be broadcast by radio and television on 27 April, following his meetings with the major stakeholders of the country.

Events in Côte d'Ivoire in the coming days and weeks will attest to the irreversible commitment of our people and Government to working for peace and stability in the subregion. Today, however, Côte d'Ivoire and West Africa need the active and creative support of the international community, including donors, the international financial institutions, the United Nations system and the members of this Council, which play a lead role and, whether they like it or not, have a responsibility as a global driving force, instigator and catalyst of the complementary interaction of the world's components. Their help and the steady political support of the great Powers are

essential if we in the subregion and in each of its nations are to succeed in the political transition and adaptation that our economies and societies require to the globalization of the economy, trade and information.

Extended to Africa as a whole, such joint cooperation by the key actors of the international community will restore peace and the conditions in which the Millennium Development Goals and the New Partnership for Africa's Development can be achieved. From that perspective, and pursuant to article 10 of the Pretoria Agreement, Côte d'Ivoire would greatly appreciate receiving expertise and assistance from the United Nations in the elections to be held in October 2005, in accordance with the terms of the Constitution. I pay tribute here to the exemplary cooperation being displayed by the Security Council, the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States in seeking a peaceful solution to the Ivorian crisis.

I cannot conclude without noting the need to standardize the command structures of impartial forces engaged in peacekeeping in West Africa and in Africa in general. Unified command of such forces strengthens their impartiality, makes their activities intelligible to the peoples being assisted in their peace-building processes, and creates conditions of trust by the people in those forces and of close cooperation with local populations. I hope that the Security Council will take account of that reality on the ground in its peacekeeping operations and of this request by my delegation in its forthcoming draft resolutions on African crisis situations.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I call on Mr. Pahad to respond to comments.

Mr. Pahad: We want once again to take this opportunity to thank the Council for its consistent support for Africa's efforts to resolve the Côte d'Ivoire crisis. I wish also to express our profound thanks to the African Union Chairman, President Obasanjo, for his consistent support for the mediation.

Again, I want to express our appreciation for the positive and constructive statements that have been made today. It is clear that, through our collective efforts, progress has been made in Côte d'Ivoire, but that, as has been said, many challenges remain. Africa therefore looks forward to working with the Security Council, the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Schori, to ensure that we achieve a long-lasting solution. That is very important because, as we all know, Côte d'Ivoire is very strategically situated, and positive developments there will have a positive impact on the whole region.

I also believe that, if we succeed in achieving peace and stability in Côte d'Ivoire, it will also have a positive impact on other countries that are emerging from conflict and attempting to work towards creating conditions for their elections. I refer here, inter alia, to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi and the Sudan. I am confident that the Council, being conscious of its responsibilities, will take the necessary decisions to ensure that elections do take place in Côte d'Ivoire by 31 October 2005.

We leave New York emboldened by the fact that the Council has indicated its support for the peace process in Côte d'Ivoire and that it will remain seized by Africa's efforts to find a solution. We look forward to a peaceful and stable Côte d'Ivoire because, as I have said, it is in the interest of all of Africa and it will have a massive positive impact on our efforts, as Africans, to find African solutions to the conflicts in Africa.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council will remain seized of the matter.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.